THE MIZAN NEWSLETTER

No.3 March 1959

The Mizan Newsletter aims at giving an objective and balanced account of current Soviet writings on the Middle East.

PERSIA'S WESTERN ALLIANCES AND THE USSR

Persia's alleged refusal to sign a non-aggression treaty with the USSR, together with her insistence on concluding a defence agreement with the USA, have been the subject of pronouncements by the Soviet Government and by Khrushchev himself. At the same time a sharper tone has been evident in Soviet writings on Persian policy; this is best exemplified in an article by M. Ivanov, entitled "Which road will Iran take?", in MIROVAYA EKONOMIKA I MEZHDUNARODYYE OTNOSHENIYA for February 1959.

The Soviet Statement of 10th February Talks on the conclusion of a Soviet-Persian treaty of friendship and non-aggression were held in Tehran from 29th January to 10th February, on which date the Soviet delegation made a statement alleging that the talks had been "wrecked" by the Persian Government, which had "refused" to conclude the treaty which it had itself proposed.

According to the Soviet statement, the Persian Government on 19th January had sent to Moscow a draft of the treaty it proposed. The Soviet delegation then brought to Tehran a Soviet draft which "took into consideration many provisions of the Iranian draft", providing for increased peaceful cooperation between the two countries, but stipulating that neither side should "grant third states the right to build or use already existing military bases and aerodromes on its territory, or allow the stationing of armed forces of any third state on it". These proposals, however, the Persian side "did not even mention" during the discussions.

At the same time, the statement continued, the Soviet Government made big concessions. It agreed to discuss the annulment of Articles Five and Six of the 1921 Treaty, articles which permitted the entry of Soviet forces into Persia in certain eventualities; in doing so it took into consideration the Persian Government's assurance that it would not conclude military agreements with the USA or any third countries. Further, it did not insist on Persia's withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact, taking into consideration the Shah's statements that Persia's participation in this pact would not be used against the security of the Soviet Union. Finally, it accepted the full text of the draft treaty put forward by the Persian side; in doing so it assumed that the Persian Government would undertake not to conclude bilateral agreements with any third states directed against the USSR, and would also undertake not to permit the establishment of foreign military bases and the stationing of foreign troops in its territory.

What happened next - according to the Soviet account - is perhaps not so clear from the Soviet statement as from a PRAVDA article of 14th February by "Observer": the Persian Foreign Minister announced that his Government would only be prepared to sign the draft treaty if amendments were made to it sanctioning Persia's commitments under the Baghdad Pact. Further, the Persian Foreign Minister now declared that his Government would after all sign the military agreement with the USA.

The Soviet statement here continues as follows: "This reply of the Shah's Government can only be interpreted as a refusal to conclude such a treaty with the Soviet Union and to put on record those undertakings which more than once were given by the Iranian side both before and during the discussions". The Persian Government had evidently concluded "a deal with those circles of certain foreign powers which count on using Iranian territory as a springboard for aggression against the USSR"; this meant "a sharp turn in the policy of the Shah's Government, leading Iran into the camp of the opponents of the USSR"; such actions would "mark a turning-point in the relations between the USSR and Iran". (Excerpts from the Soviet statement are given as Appendix A below.)

PRAVDA's Comment of 14th February The PRAVDA article mentioned above, entitled "The perfidious policy of the Iranian Government", made further charges against the Persian Government's conduct of the negotiations. It had become clear, said PRAVDA, that the prime object of the Persian side was to destroy the treaties of 1921 and 1927 and the guarantees for the security of the USSR which they contained. As for the Persian Government's rejection of its own proposal for a non-aggression treaty, this was the result of messages sent to the Shah by the Presidents of the USA, Turkey and Pakistan and the British Premier; but, in any case, the Persian proposal had been "nothing more than a game" to deceive the Persian public; the Shah's Government was completely under the influence

of bourgeois profiteers and feudal exploiters who were making fabulous fortunes out of Persia's cooperation with the USA and Britain.

A government which did not consider the wishes of its people, PRAVDA continued, could not be durable, even if it was supported by foreign bayonets. The people of Iraq had "found ways and means of freeing themselves from a rotten and hated regime". The Persian public today was more alert and active than ever before; it was against any further US domination in Persia. Persian generals had called for the removal of US advisers from the Persian Army; they had said that, if US forces entered Persia, the Persian Army would disband as a mark of protest. The workers were coming out in defence of their rights against reaction and foreign monopolists; the oil workers of Abadan had shouted down the Persian Foreign Minister when he tried to make a reassuring speech to them, and were demanding improved living conditions and "the curbing of the foreign exploiters of the international oil consortium". Peoples today insisted that their rulers should follow a policy of peace and friendship with neighbouring countries; if they did not, they must face inevitable downfall, either "downfall in the Cuban fashion...or in the Baghdad style". The Persian Government's hostile and perfidious actions marked a turning-point in Persian-Soviet relations. They could not fail to result in dire consequences for Persia itself.

Khrushchev's Speeches of 17th and 24th February In the course of a speech made at Tula on 17th February Khrushchev referred to the proposed Persian-Soviet treaty. He said that the Shah had abandoned the idea of the treaty under Western pressure, and had decided to conclude the military agreement with the USA, allegedly for defence against a Soviet threat. But the Soviet Union, Khrushchev declared, did not threaten and had never threatened Persia. What the Shah feared was his own people, and he wanted US troops to protect his throne; but the lesson of the Iraqi revolution was that no foreign treaty could protect a monarchy against its own people.

In his speech to electors of the Kalinin district of Moscow on 24th February Khrushchev said that the Shah had taken great offence at his remarks of 17th February. Yet the Soviet Union's good intentions were obvious. The Persian people realized this - and this seemed to worry the Shah even more. He wanted the USA to promise military aid in the event of either aggression or subversion. But no outside forces could protect anyone against his own people, as was proved by the Baghdad events of last year - event for which the Soviet Union could certainly not be blamed. The Soviet Union did not interfere in the domestic affairs of any state, and it maintained good relations with many monarchies. The Persians were a wise people; they needed no help in reaching a proper understanding of the question. (For the relevant excerpts of Khrushchev's speeches, see Appendix B.)

M. Ivanov's Article In an article entitled "Which road will Iran take?" in MIROVAYA EKONOMIKA I MEZHDUNARODNYYE OTNOSHENIYA for February, M. Ivanov said that Persia could choose one of two roads: either that of neutrality and cooperation with peace-loving States, or that of participation in military blocs directed against the USSR. Of these two roads, the first meant political independence and economic progress; the second meant economic and political subjection to foreign imperialism.

Recent Persian history, said Ivanov, afforded examples of both these lines of policy. In 1919 Vosuq ud-Dowleh had allied Persia with Britain in a policy hostile to the Soviet Union. The suspension of trade with the USSR crippled Persia's economy; the country became a destitute colonial appendage of Britain. But, thanks to the growing national liberation movement, Vosuq ud-Dowleh's Government was overthrown, the treaty with Britain was annulled and on 26th February 1921 the Soviet-Persian Agreement was signed, laying the foundations for Persia's political and economic independence and for fruitful Soviet-Persian economic cooperation. But during the 1930s Persia returned to the road of hostility to the USSR, coming increasingly under the control of Nazi Germany.

Since the second World War, said Ivanov, history had been repeated. The US-Persian agreement of 1947 had given US military advisers the right to occupy prominent posts in the Persian army. Final subjection to foreign military blocs had followed Persia's accession to the Baghdad Pact in 1955, just as the country's economic subjection had been secured by the 1954 agreement with the oil consortium, by the law of 1955 encouraging foreign capital investment, and by the acceptance of a World Bank loan in 1956. Vast military expenditure, foreign monopolist control of trade, financial indebtedness and neglect of industry had led to impoverishment of the working classes, hunger and unemployment, just as the landlords' unrelenting grip on agriculture meant misery and destitution for the peasants. Friendship with the USSR brought economic benefits; but Persia had chosen the road of hostility to the USSR, and had even adopted a hostile attitude towards Afghanistan and, since the Iraqi revolution, towards Iraq.

The proposed new Persian-US military alliance, said Ivanov, was directly contrary to Article Three of the Soviet-Persian Agreement of 1927. Its conclusion would be an open act of aggression and a declaration of interventionist intentions towards the Soviet Union. The US aim was, first, to make Persia into a bridgehead directed against the USSR and other peace-loving states; second, to use the military alliance as a weapon against the national liberation movement in the Middle East; third, to ensure the controlling position of US oil companies in Persia. (In November 1958, said Ivanov, a conference of US oil magnates in Los Angeles agreed that the US-Persian military agreement was indispensable for the safety of US capital investment in the Persian oil industry, and

for ensuring freedom from competition by other companies.) The Soviet public regarded the conclusion of a US-Persian military agreement as an act hostile to the Soviet Union; they hoped that Persian national forces would not allow their country to be drawn by imperialism into adventures dangerous for the national interests of Persia.

SOVIET ACCOUNTS OF OMAN AND ITS PEOPLE

The British Connection The independent status of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman is not recognized in Soviet works of reference. In one of these, on a map, the country is marked as British territory. Another says that in the Sultanate "supreme authority in fact belongs to the British political resident, who is at the same time British Consul-General in Muscat". One writer calls the Sultan a "British puppet". Another says that by the 1891 treaty Britain "fastened her protectorate on the Sultanate". A NEW TIMES article on the July 1957 rising in Oman said: "So dependent is the present Sultan on Britain that, alone among all the Arab rulers, he publicly expressed approval of the Western Powers' Suez venture...The real ruler of Muscat and the other vassal Persian Gulf States is the British 'political resident' in Bahrain... His unofficial deputy in Muscat is Sir William Lindsay, agent of the British oil interests and formerly police magistrate in the Sudan." The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia (1955) says that early in the nineteenth century the Sayyids of Oman became "British vassals" in return for British protection against pirates and against the Wahhabis.

The Oman Campaign On the status of the self-styled Imam of Oman the encyclopaedia merely states, briefly, that in 1913 the Imamate of Oman in the interior declared itself independent of the Sultanate and of Britain. Since the Sultan's successful Oman campaign of 1955, however, and still more since the July rising of 1957, Omani resistance under the Imam's leadership has been represented in Soviet works, and in numerous articles, as an epic of national struggle against foreign imperialism. Soviet writers say that in 1920 the full independence of the Imamate of Oman was recognized in a treaty signed both by the Sultan and by a British representative; that the Oman tribes were left undisturbed until 1955, when large oil deposits were discovered in Oman, and the Imam refused a concession to the British oil companies; and that the Sultan then, with British prompting and assistance, invaded Oman. (Writing in SOVREMENNYY VOSTOK No. 3 of 1958, G. Drambyants said that, according to reports, the money for the Oman campaign was provided by the Iraq Petroleum Company, "and THE TIMES writes not without satisfaction that

this company will derive immediate profit from the events in Oman".) All-out ground and air attacks, say the Soviet accounts, have failed to reduce the gallant people of Oman to submission. Reports on fighting in Oman put out by the Cairo office of the Omani Imamate continue to be published in the Soviet press.

The Buraimi Oasis: US Penetration Soviet writers show less agreemont in their accounts of the rival claims to the Buraimi oasis. The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia (1955) said that the oasis, "believed to have oil deposits", was in Oman territory; US interests were behind the Saudi claim to it. THE COUNTRIES OF THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST, which went to press in October 1957, similarly refers to the oasis as "situated in Oman territory". In an article in SOVREMENNYY VOSTOK for February 1957, however, I. Vladimirov speaks of the oasis as "belonging to Saudia Arabia"; and so does I.M. Fil'shtinskiy in SOVETSKOYE VOSTOKOVEDENIYE No. 4 of 1958, p. 197. More than one writer emphasizes the strategic character of the oasis.

The Buraimi question is used to illustrate the favourite Soviet theme of Anglo-US rivalry for oil in the Arabian peninsula. Similarly, Drambyants in the article quoted above said that it was the discovery of oil by US companies in southern Oman that had prompted the State Department's endeavours to conclude a consular treaty with Muscat. (A Moscow home-service broadcast of 19th January this year said that the Sultan had signed the treaty; he had "sensed the inevitable decline of Britain's Near Eastern empire, and decided to switch over to the USA".)

Trucial Oman Trucial Oman is described in the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia as "one of the main strongpoints of British imperialism in the Arabian peninsula". The seven States of Trucial Oman, it says, were subjected to British rule early in the nineteenth century under the pretext of suppressing piracy; the shaykhs were forced to sign inequitable treaties placing their territories under British control. "But the people's masses in these States never ceased their struggle against the foreign enslavers. The British colonizers, brutally stamping on the national liberation movement, conducted a punitive expedition in the States of Trucial Oman at the end of the 1930s."

A recent work in Arabic on the Trucial States, AL-AMARAT AS-SABA' 'ALA AS-SAHIL AL-AKHDAR, by Ahmad Qasim al-Burayni, was reviewed by I.M. Fil'shtinskiy in SOVETSKOYE VOSTOKOVEDENIYE No. 4 of 1958. In his review Fil'shtinskiy gives an account of the population of Trucial States and their occupations and the local system of government; he writes objectively and with detachment, except in his reference to "the British imperialists" who have built a military aerodrome in the shaykhdom of Sharja and have built up a local military force with British officers.

SOVIET ANGLE ON THE NEWS

Below are reviewed Soviet newspaper reports on Middle East events published during the period 8th February - 7th March

Soviet-Iraqi relations Soviet newspapers reported prominently the visit to the USSR of the Iraqi delegation which came for talks on the conclusion of a Soviet-Iraqi agreement on economic and technical cooperation. Iraqi newspaper articles praising Soviet help and support for Iraq were quoted in Soviet newspapers.

The Gazette of the Supreme Soviet for 22.1.59 published the text of the Soviet-Iraqi trade agreement of 11.10.58. A list of Soviet goods for export to Iraq, appended to the agreement, comprised: complete factory equipment; hoisting and transport equipment; pumping and compressor equipment; building equipment; road-building equipment; geological prospecting equipment; equipment for the oil industry; printing and duplicating equipment; rolling stock and other railway equipment; telephone equipment; electric motors and generators; mobile electric stations; diesel engines; machines and instruments; agricultural machines and tractors; motor vehicles (light lorries and special); passenger buses; bicycles and motor-cycles; cinema equipment; radio and television sets; optical apparatus; geodetic instruments; watches and precision instruments; ball and roller-bearings; other machines and industrial installations; rolled ferrous metals; metal products for general purposes; rolled aluminium; cable and wire; lumber and plywood; chemicals; medicaments and pharmaceutical goods; cotton cloth and thread; newsprint and other paper; asbestos; facing blocks; products of the ceramic industry; sewing machines; electric appliances for domestic and industrial use; plastic goods; sanitary equipment; window glass; electric lamps; alcoholic drinks and food products; and "films, books and other goods". Iraqi goods for export to the USSR comprised dates, barley and other grains, raw hides, gut, cotton, wool, goat hair, oil seeds, tobacco, and "raw materials and other goods".

The UAR's attitude to communism Soviet newspaper articles on this theme, and on Soviet-UAR relations in general, are given below in chronological order:

8.2.59 KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA attacked Fikri Abazah for an article in the Cairo weekly AL-MUSAWWAR which warned Afro-Asian youth against communism. "Fikri Abazah visited Moscow not very long ago, and expressed great admiration for the achievements of our communist country, its progress and its love of peace...Today we suddenly find him saying...that 'communism is the child of imperialism'...Whatever the motive or reason,

the one thing clear to us is that such articles cannot promote solidarity among Afro-Asian youth in the struggle against imperialism. It is in vain that Fikri Abazah, attempting to intimidate the young people, slanders communism and communists. Young Afro-Asians know that there are no more staunch and faithful supporters of the struggle against imperialism than the communists". Evidently, said KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, Fikri Abazah had been drawn by the imperialists into the anti-communist campaign, along with Mustafa Amin and Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal.

15.2.59 In a PRAVDA dispatch from Cairo Belyayev praised Khalid Muhyi ad-Din, editor of the Cairo AL-MASA, for an article denouncing false and tendentious reports about the situation in Iraq and about Iraqi-UAR relations; these reports, said Muhyi ad-Din, could only benefit the imperialists. (On 1.3.59 Moscow radio broadcast a talk by Khalid Muhyi ad-Din praising Soviet friendship and support for the UAR - Ed.)

19.2.59 PRAVDA attacked two articles by Hasanayn Haykal published in the Cairo AL-AHRAM. In the first of these, said PRAVDA, Haykal maintained that communism, as an ideology, did not suit the conditions of the Arab East. PRAVDA commented: "This will be decided by the Arab peoples themselves; this will be shown by history...But the Cairo journalist is adding grist to the mill of those who hate the friendship between the Arab peoples and the socialist nations and those who spare no effort to undermine it". In another article, said PRAVDA, Haykal had said that Iraq and its Premier were falling victim not only to communism but to an "imperialist-communist alliance" directed against Arab nationalism and Arab unity. PRAVDA commented: "Really one must lose all sense of shame to say such things. Thousands of Arab communists have laid down their lives in the struggle against imperialism...Haykal's long-standing connections with American quarters are known not only in Cairo but outside it too. Suffice it to say that he acquired the profession of journalist at the American University in Cairo, where he was taught not only how to write but in whose interest to do it".

22.2.59 On the occasion of the first anniversary of the UAR PRAVDA published a long article by Alexandrov on Soviet-UAR friendship. The imperialists, said PRAVDA, would not succeed either in damaging this friendship or in splitting the Arab States and making them distrust the USSR.

Turkish-US military cooperation In an article of 19.2.59 entitled "Turkey on a Perilous Path" TRUD said that Turkish-US discussions had been in progress in Ankara since the beginning of the month, on the subject of extending Turkish-US military cooperation, including the

building of ballistic missile launching sites on Turkish territory. Turkey, said TRUD, was being turned into a US forward base. Powerful radar stations were being set up near the Soviet frontiers. The USA had been given the right to build its own military bases on Turkish soil and to maintain there the equipment needed for atomic warfare, with large contingents of its own troops. The dangerous character of the new Turkish-US military agreement was no less obvious than its disastrous consequences for Turkey's economy.

The Cyprus agreement The Zurich agreement on Cyprus was examined in a PRAVDA article of 17.2.59 by "Observer". At Zurich, said "Observer", the Greek Government had made concessions to Britain and Turkey which amounted to abandonment of its previous stand on the Cyprus issue. In an atmosphere of deep secrecy and behind the backs of the Cypriots decisions had been taken which ignored the Cypriots' just demand for self-determination. Establishment of a so-called Republic of Cyprus only altered the Cypriots' position on paper, since Britain retained military bases on the island for an indefinite period and the new Republic agreed in advance to join NATO. The USA had been desperately anxious to save Cyprus as a NATO base; the Greek Government had given way to US blackmail and pressure.

The London agreement on Cyprus was the subject of a KRASNAYA ZVEZDA article on 6.3.59. Cyprus, the paper said, would only be independent in name; in fact it would fall under the joint sovereignty of Britain, Greece and Turkey, as guarantors of the island's regime. British, Greek and Turkish troops would be stationed on the island; and there was a possibility that in future US atomic bases would be constructed. The Zurich and London agreements would further exacerbate the situation in Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean; not only did they not satisfy the demands of Cypriot patriots, but they were contrary to the interests of peace and security in this region.

"Atomic base" in Bahrain IZVESTIA of 20.2.59 quoted the Syrian AN-NASR for the report that Britain had obtained permission from the Shaykh of Bahrain for the construction of two atomic weapon bases in Bahrain territory.

Denial of reported Jewish emigration from the USSR IZVESTIYA of 20.2.59 said that US news agencies had been disseminating a "provocative fabrication" to the effect that the USSR was encouraging mass emigration of its Jews to Israel, in order to increase Israel's military and labour strength. It was well known, said IZVESTIYA, that there was no emigration of Jews from the USSR to Israel; and as for another propaganda report, that Soviet Jews would take part in the world Zionist Congress

in Stockholm, it was well known that Soviet Jews had never taken part in such congresses, considering Zionism to be a reactionary movement. There had not been and could not be any revision of their attitude towards Zionism.

Issued by Central Asian Research Centre
in association with
St. Antony's College (Oxford) Soviet Affairs Study Group.

M I Z A N N E W S L E T T E R

APPENDIX A

The Statement of 10.2.59 to the Persian Government

PRAVDA of 13.2.59 published the text of the statement to the Persian Government on 10.2.59 by V.S. Semenov, the head of the Soviet Government delegation visiting Tehran. The following is a translation of those passages of the statement which give an account of the Soviet-Persian discussions.

...On 19th January this year the Government of the Shah of Iran, through the Soviet Ambassador in Tehran, transmitted a proposal for the conclusion of a treaty of friendship and aggression between the two states, and also an Iranian draft of a treaty. The Government of the USSR welcomed the idea of the conclusion of such a treaty and expressed itself in favour of negotiations being conducted in the matter, declaring, moreover, its willingness either to receive for this purpose an Iranian Government delegation in Moscow, or, should the Government of Iran find it more convenient, to send a Soviet Government delegation to Tehran. In reply, the Government of Iran expressed, on 27th January, the wish that the Soviet Government should send with all speed its delegation to Tehran, and that the talks should be carried on in conditions of strict confidence. This was accepted on the Soviet side. Thus a Soviet Government delegation arrived in Tehran on 29th January, on the urgent invitation of the Government of Iran...

The Soviet delegation submitted to the Shah the Soviet draft of a treaty of friendship, non-aggression and collaboration between the USSR and Iran, in which many of the proposals in the Iranian draft were taken into consideration. In addition to this, the Soviet draft contained a number of proposals which aimed at a broader development of friendly collaboration between the two countries. In the Soviet draft it was said, in particular, that the Soviet Union and Iran should build up their relations on a basis of the principles of mutual respect regarding territorial integrity and sovreignty, non-aggression, non-interference with each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual advantage. These principles are in conformity with the decisions of the Bandung Conference, which were taken with the participation of Iran, also with the principles and aims of the United Nations' Organization.

The draft contained, further, an obligation, on either side, not to

grant to third States the right to set up on its territory any military bases or aerodromes, nor to make use of existing ones, and not to allow the armed forces of any third State to be stationed on its territory. The Soviet draft treaty envisaged a further development in economic commercial and cultural ties between the two countries. In this connection the willingness was expressed on the part of the Government of USSR to cooperate with Iran on the lines of friendly collaboration in the development of Iran's national economy, and, in particular, in the development of industry and agriculture, and also in the construction of irrigation and hydro-electrical and transport installations. In addition, measures were envisaged for the extension of collaboration in the sphere of culture and public health, and also in the combating of animal diseases and agricultural pests.

Unfortunately the Soviet delegation was compelled to take cognizance of the fact that, in the course of the talks, the Government of the Shah of Iran met with a complete silence these proposals by the Soviet Government, and did not accept the hand of friendship extended in all sincerity by the Soviet Union to Iran.

On the Iranian side, at the time of the talks, particular significance was attached to the question of a change in regard to the operation of Articles 5 and 6 of the Soviet-Iranian treaty of 1921. These articles, as is known, contain obligations, on either side, not to permit the stationing on their territories of the armed forces of any third State such as might constitute a threat to the frontiers, interests or security of the other contracting party, and also an obligation on the part of Iran not to allow her territory to be made into a base for military invasions of the Soviet Union.

A proposal for a change in the operation of these articles of the Soviet-Iranian treaty at present in force was not entirely comprehensible to the Soviet side, inasmuch as, according to existing data, the conclusion of a military agreement between Iran and the USA was being prepared, whereby the possibility was contemplated of the admission of American forces on to the territory of Iran, as also a further extension of military collaboration between Iran and the USA within the framework of the Baghdad block. Nevertheless, taking into account an explanation by the Shah, the Soviet Government agreed to discuss with the Iranian side the question of a change in Articles 6 and 5 of the 1921 treaty.

By taking this important step the Government of the USSR was endeavouring to clear all obstacles from the path, to eliminate such doubts as might complicate Soviet-Iranian relations and cause dissatisfaction to arise now or in future. It also took into consideration a declaration on the Iranian side to the effect that, in the event of the conclusion between the USSR and Iran of a treaty of friendship and non-aggression, the Government of Iran would not conclude with the USA, or

with any third parties, military agreements directed against the Soviet Union; and it also took into account a declaration by the Government of the Shah of Iran to the effect that a change in the said articles, which had been included in the 1921 treaty in special historical circumstances, and were defined by Article 6 (whereby the possibility was envisaged, in a given situation, of the admission of Soviet forces on to Iranian territory), would contribute to the laying of a solid foundation for mutual confidence and the development of friendly relations between the USSR and Iran - the end towards which the Soviet Government was constantly striving.

Naturally, the Soviet side could not fail to take into account the fact that should the aggressive imperialist Powers had not abandoned their plans for using the territory of Iran for the preparation of military adventures against the Soviet Union and other peace-loving States. In this connection, in the course of the talks, the Soviet Government expressed its misgivings that Iran's participation in the military Baghdad Pact would be used against the Soviet Union. On the Soviet side the opinion was voiced that it would be a good thing if both parties, the USSR as well as Iran, should, on the conclusion of a treaty of friendship, non-aggression and collaboration, come to meet one another to discuss the creation of guarantees necessary to the security of both of them, and that Iran, on her part, should at the same time leave the Baghdad Pact.

It was declared with entire frankness by the Soviet delegation that the Baghdad Pact, as experience was showing, had not brought, and could not bring, security to Iran. Placing on the shoulders of its Moslem member States, the burden of immense military expenditure, and straining their economic resources to the point of exhaustion, the Baghdad Pact was in actual fact leading to a transformation of the torritory of these States into a theatre of military operations, in the event of an armed conflict arising, which would be of benefit solely to external imperialist Powers, the agelong oppressors of the peoples of the Near and Middle East. A weapon in the hands of the aggressor Powers, the Baghdad Pact had given rise to unfriendly and aggravated relations between the USSR and Iran, as also between Iran and other peace-loving neighbours, so that the result of Iran's remaining within the Pact - was merely negative.

Taking into account, however, the declarations made by the Shah's Government to the effect that Iran's participation in the Baghdad Pact would not be used against the interest of the security of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Government did not insist on Iran's leaving the Baghdad Pact. The Soviet Government took this step prompted by a sincere desire to emphasize its trust in what the Shah had stated, although it is known to the Soviet Union that the organizers of the Baghdad Pact regard it as an aggressive organization directed first and foremost

against the Soviet Union and other peace-loving countries. It was reckoned that on the strengthening of peace and relaxing of tension in the Middle and Near East the Baghdad Pact would wither, as does a tree with rotten roots from which the Iranian people had not received, and would not receive, any fruit.

The fact that the Soviet Union maintains a strictly negative attitude towards the aggressive Baghdad Pact has been known to the Shah's Government since the day when the pact was formed. Nevertheless it now proposes to us that we shall deny our own convictions, confirmed by life's experience, in this matter, and even proposes that we shall put our signature to a treaty purporting to justify in the eyes of the nations of the Near and Middle East the aggressive Baghdad Pact and Iran's participation in it. Does this speak of an endeavour on the part of the Shah's Government to reach an understanding with the Soviet Union?

Having examined the report of the Soviet delegation concerning the most recent conversation which took place on 3rd February with the Shah of Iran, the Soviet Government recommended its delegation to tell the Shah that, prompted by a genuine desire to do everything possible for the establishment of truly friendly and neighbourly relations between the USSR and Iran, it had decided to take yet another step to meet the wishes of the Iranian Government.

The Soviet Government declared that it would accept in full the draft treaty of friendship and non-aggression which had been offered to it on the part of Iran on 19th January of this year, and which, in view of its contents, was advantageous primarily to Iran. The Soviet delegation pointed out on 6th February that it had plenipotentiary powers to sign this treaty immediately. At the same time it was stated that, as would be readily understood, in taking such a step the Soviet Government assumed that the Government of Iran and the Shah personally would undertake such actions as should testify to a sincere striving on the part of Iran to strengthen confidence between the two countries and to provide, in equal measure, for security both for Iran and for the Soviet Union. In acting thus the Government of the USSR proceeded on the assumption that, in connection with the signing of the treaty of friendship and non-aggression, the Government of Iran would, as had been stated in the course of the talks by responsible Iranian statesmen, take on itself the obligation not to conclude bilateral treaties with any third Powers directed against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government also assumed that, in conformity with assurances given by the Shah, the Government of Iran would also take on itself the obligation not to offer its territory for the setting up of foreign military bases, or for the stationing on it of foreign troops, under any pretext whatsoever. It was obvious, not only that such a declaration by the Iranian Government could not possibly prove detrimental to the independence of Iran, but that it would contribute, indeed, to the strengthening of her State sovreignty.

The reply of the Shah's Government transmitted today by you can only be understood as a refusal by that Government to conclude such a treaty with the Soviet Union, attaching thereto those obligations which had been agreed to by Iran on more than one occasion both before and at the time of the talks. Now they want to bury this whole affair and even to drown the clear-cut question concerning prohibition of the admittance of foreign troops on to Iranian territory, in the troubled waters of "study" and controversy, in commissions of specialists.

The refusal by the Government of Iran to accept its own proposal concerning the conclusion of a treaty of friendship and non-aggression with the Soviet Union, which proposal was put forward only a couple of weeks ago, at most, and the rejection of the draft of such treaty, proposed by Iran herself, cannot fail to evoke surprise. For did not the Shah of Iran, as early as the first conversation with the Soviet delegation, on 30th January, make, as is known, a declaration to the effect that the signing of such a treaty would indeed by a turning-point as regards the improvement of relations between the USSR and Iran and as regards the relaxing of tension in the region of the Near and Middle East? And is it, indeed, possible to doubt that the conclusion of a treaty of this kind and the establishment of friendship and trust between our two countries would be in keeping with the interests both of the Iranian and the Soviet peoples, and of all who are concerned in the maintenance and consolidation of peace?

The Soviet Government, as you see, reacted with trust to the said declaration of the Shah and to the steps initiated by the Iranian Government. It did everything possible in order to meet the wishes of the Iranian side. And now, when, it would seem, there were no obstacles in the way of the conclusion of the treaty proposed by the Government of Iran, the Shah's Government declines its own proposal.

Now we see that, on the part of the Shah's Government, all this was nothing more than a game with an evil intention, designed to mislead public opinion, above all in Iran....

M I Z A N N E W S L E T T E R

APPENDIX B

Khrushchev's Speech of 17.2.59

In a speech made at Tula on 17.2.59 Khrushchev made the following references to Soviet-Persian relations:

...In conclusion I should like to say a few words on the subject of Iran. As you remember, the Shah of Iran came to our country, and, in the course of conversations, expressed a wish to improve good-neighbourly relations. We on our part did everything possible to improve relations between our two countries. When the Government of Iran offered to us to conclude a treaty of friendship and non-aggression, we sent our delegation.

Now it is known to us that, as a result of pressure from the USA, Britain and Turkey, the Shah of Iran has rejected his own proposals concerning the conclusion of a treaty, and has decided to conclude a bilateral military treaty with the USA, which will entail the transformation of Iran into an American military base. In so doing, the Shah of Iran speaks as if there existed a threat to Iran from the direction of the Soviet Union. For statements of this kind there are, however, no grounds whatsoever; we have lived for many years as neighbours, and during all this time the Soviet Union has never once given cause for being accused of an unfriendly attitude towards its neighbour. On the contrary, during the last few years we have solved by negotiation many matters of disagreement which had existed earlier.

Whom then, in actual fact, does the Shah of Iran fear? He does not fear us, but fears his own people. He, it is clear to see, is not assured of the stability of his throne, and for that reason keeps his personal money invested not in Iran but in England. He is seriously disturbed by what has taken place in Iraq. As is known, the Baghdad Pact was named after the capital of Iraq, Baghdad. But when the people of Iraq rose against the power of a crumbling throne and of an Iraqi Government which had sold itself to the imperialists, no help was forthcoming either from the Baghdad Pact or from the Dulles-Eisenhower doctrine.

This lesson goes to show that no crumbling throne will be saved from its own people by a bilateral, or even by a quinquelateral, treaty.

The Shah of Iran fears, above all, his own people and, by the signing of a bilateral military treaty with the USA, wants to ensure that American troops shall protect his throne. But the matter is presented as if the Shah wished to secure Iran against the Soviet Union. Such statements, however, are designed for naive people. The Soviet Union has never threatened, and does not threaten, either Iran or anybody else.

We shall try to make Iran understand our premises aright. We do not wish ill to the hard-working people of Iran. We shall of course unmask a policy which is calculated to do harm or injury to our peoples, the peoples of the Soviet Union and the people of Iran.

Khrushchev's Speech of 24.2.59

In his election speech of 24.2.59 Khrushchev made the following references to (a) Soviet relations with the UAR and Iraq, and (b) Soviet-Persian relations:

In this connection, comrades, I should like to say a few words concerning our relations with the United Arab Republic and with certain other countries of the Near and Middle East.

Lately, the forces inimical to peace have been doing their utmost to create dissension and to achieve a breaking of the friendly relations which have been formed between the peoples of the Soviet Union and the United Arab Republic, hoping, so to speak, to warm themselves in a glow of satisfaction thereat. This wish of theirs has, however, proved to be impossible of realization.

You know that there was a speech by Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir, President of the United Arab Republic, at Port Said, as well as other speeches. In the report to the XXIst Party Congress I mentioned these speeches. I do not think there is any need to repeat now the contents of these speeches. In voicing them, each of us has expounded his own views. Col. Nasir is an Arab nationalist, and I am a Soviet communist. It is obvious that when we are speaking on matters of ideology we express different views. This is natural.

In the report to the XXIst Party Congress views were expressed which were founded on our communist teaching. Yet we have never considered that relations between States with different social systems should be built up from the standpoint of the ideological views of the leaders of those States. If that were so, it would, as you know, be impossible to ensure the peaceful coexistence of different States. Questions of internal policy are a matter for each Government and each nation. What each nation likes or does not like - that is its internal affair. It may even be that a nation does not like the existing state

of affairs, but endures such state of affairs, because in the given conditions it is not possible to alter it - so that is why the nation lives in those conditions. Well, let it go on living so until it finds out for itself the necessity of changing this state of affairs. Such a right belongs to every nation.

The other day, when I was speaking as it happened about Iran, I stressed the idea that it is the business of every nation to decide what social structure and political order suit it best. At this the Shah of Iran, our southern neighbour, was very much offended.

When the Shah of Iran was in the Soviet Union, we received him with ample hospitality, as the head of a neighbouring State. But he, apparently, attributed this to his personal merits. Let him not be offended if what I have said here is reported to him.

Better aspirations than those of the Soviet Union, better proposals than those of the Soviet Union - to live in friendship and peace and to help one's neighbours and friends - he will scarcely find anywhere. On the initiative of the Soviet Government, for example, an agreement was concluded between the USSR and Iran for the regulation of matters concerning the frontier. By this agreement disputes dating back 100-150 years were liquidated, and the frontier was defined, the definition being effected chiefly at the expense of Soviet Union territory. Our country is a large one; our territory is immense. We considered that we should not be miserly, that it was better to sacrifice a little and to gain friends. This, as they say, is worth more than having an extra five-copeck piece in one's pocket.

When we talked with the Shah at the time of his stay in Moscow, he, so it appeared, showed both wisdom and an understanding of Soviet foreign policy, and gave his word and assurance that he was being guided, and would be guided, by that which should ensure the best relations between our two States.

We then found out, however, what sort of activity he was pursuing behind the scenes. For you know, of course, how secrets are kept. I think that the Shah of Iran himself knows that. And if he does not know, then I will say that many secrets are kept, perhaps for a week or two at most, and then are found out - notwithstanding. Everyone entrusted with a secret of some kind has intimate associates to whom he may confide even his most zealously guarded secret. And the person thus confided in has, in his turn, friends of this sort. And he also wishes to tell his intimate associate "just in confidence", "just him personally, nobody else". And this one passes it on to his friend, so that in this manner the whole world gets to know these secrets. There is nothing unusual in this; it has always been so, and probably always will be. One person thinks he is talking in strict confidence, but others know all about it

- literally all.

We do not want to aggravate our relations with Iran, they are bad enough as it is. We should like them to improve, since, however bad these relations may be, we are still neighbours. It is better to transform bad relations into good ones than to live everlastingly as bad neighbours. That is reasonable. We therefore do not cease to hope that reason will prevail.

The Iranian people understand our good intentions, and this, obviously, worries the Shah still more. And he has, indeed, something to worry about. His Government will sign one of these days, or has already signed, a military agreement with the USA. We know that, in fact we have the text which they are to sign. What is this text all about?

The Shah is contriving to make the USA give him an undertaking that they will help him against his enemies in the event of an open military attack on Iran, should aggression occur, but also in the event of subversive activities. An open attack, that is easy to understand. Anyone who has begun a war, crossed a frontier in an unlawful manner, has indeed committed aggression. But subversive acts - that is another matter. For surely anyone could look you in the face and say "your look expresses aggressive intentions against my person". And on such a foundation America is to be asked for help, since - it would be said - "subversive activity from within" has been detected. This is absurd, comrades. But it is absurd from our point of view, although not absurd for everybody. If one is sure of one's own people, as we are sure of ours, then no outside forces are needed in order to combat subversive acts at home. We have actually cut down, considerably, our home forces, our organs of State security, and intend to cut them down still further, although such reduction must be done with good sense, so as not to find ourselves - as the expression goes - fools of the kingdom of heaven! As you know, comrades, foreign intelligence never sleeps, so that if we are caught napping that would be the best time for their subversive work within our State.

Consequently, the question of subversive acts means the combating of the enemy at home. To return to the question of the Iranian-American military treaty, who is this "enemy at home"? Obviously it is the Iranian people that is meant. No external forces will, however, save anybody from his own people! Was not the Eisenhower-Dulles doctrine proclaimed throughout the Middle and Near East, and has not the Baghdad Pact been in the nature of a stronghold of colonialism in the east? Then suddenly Mr. Dulles and President Eisenhower wake up one day and nothing is left of this Baghdad Pact but the horns and feet, as one might say, and in Baghdad there is no longer either a King or a Prime Minister.

Who is to blame for this - the Soviet Union? We do not even border on that country, and have not had an Ambassador there for a very long time.

It is obvious then that after these events in Iraq the Shah of Iran has unpleasant dreams. But we can do nothing about it. If a policy is pursued which is in keeping with the interests of the nation, then the nation will support it.

We do not intervene in the internal affairs of any State, whatever its Government may be and whatever policy they may pursue. The Soviet Union has good relations with many States that are ruled by kings. We have received the heads of these States and will be pleased to receive them in future, if they come with good intent. The hospitality of the Soviet Union will always be extended to those statesmen who maintain friendship with our nation, and the question of the form of government of the States in question is a matter for the nations themselves.

The Shah of Iran intends to sign a treaty for the event of an unpleasant situation arising for him, so that the USA shall help him to settle matters with such internal forces as may come into action against him, that is, help him to settle matters with the Iranian people.

But the Iranian nation is an ancient nation with an ancient culture, and it understands from which direction it is being threatened, whether by the Soviet Union or by some element within its own State. We shall make no suggestion to the Iranians in this matter; they are wise folk and will be well able to look after themselves.

I now turn to the question of relations with the United Arab Republic. You know that certain third Powers have tried to make glowing embers of the relations between the USSR and the UAR. We know something of the efforts devoted to this end, but it is scarcely the moment to discuss that. Some time, if we meet President Nasir, I shall be able to tell him in a friendly way what kind of counsel he has been receiving, from whom the advice has come and what it has amounted to. Secrets of this kind find their way, in the manner which I mentioned, to the very people from whom they are supposed to be hidden. I think that some of our secrets have probably got out, just as these have.

I enjoyed reading the speech by President Nasir in Cairo, a few days ago, in which he said firmly and unequivocally, that the hopes of the imperialist Powers to the effect that the friendly relations between the United Arab Republic and the Soviet Union will cool off and be destroyed are built on no solid foundation. President Nasir declared that these hopes are not destined to materialize, that the policy of the United Arab Republic will be directed towards the strengthening of our ties of friendship. We are very glad of such a declaration and say, on

our part, that we support such a policy.

We gave them the hand of friendship and help at that most terrible moment when they were attacked in the Suez Canal region. We gave them our hand when they were threatened at the time of the Syrian crisis. We gave the hand of friendship and help also at the time when clouds were gathering against the Iraqi Republic, after the revolution had taken place in Iraq. And now our standpoint is the same, since we shall always be on the side of those who fight for their freedom, for their national liberty, for the independent development of the peoples of their countries.

Very good relations have been built up between ourselves and the Iraqi Republic, and we hope they will develop still further. We have never had the pleasure of receiving a guest, or come into direct contact with, Abd al-Karim Qasim, the Prime Minister of the Iraqi Republic, but we have supported and will support the aspirations of the Arabs in the Iraqi Republic in their struggle for independence. Tomorrow a responsible Government delegation led by Mr. Kubbah, Minister of Economic Affairs in the Iraqi Republic, is due to arrive in Moscow for negotiations. We shall have pleasure in receiving this delegation, and will extend help to the Iraqi Republic by all means in our power.

We shall always cooperate with nations who fight for their independence, who fight in order that they may enjoy the fruits of their labours.

It seems to me that such policy will inflict harm on no one, but that it will on the contrary make possible the strengthening of peace throughout the world.

Issued by Central Asian Research Centre
in association with
St. Antony's College (Oxford) Soviet Affairs Study Group.